



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Edinburgh Research Explorer

Inclusive school leaders – their role in raising the achievement of all learners

Citation for published version:

Óskarsdóttir, E, Donnelly, V, Turner-Cmuchal, M & Florian, L 2020, 'Inclusive school leaders – their role in raising the achievement of all learners', *Journal of Educational Administration*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-10-2019-0190>

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1108/JEA-10-2019-0190](https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-10-2019-0190)

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

Journal of Educational Administration

Publisher Rights Statement:

This is the accepted version of the following article: Óskarsdóttir, E., Donnelly, V., Turner-Cmuchal, M. and Florian, L. (2020), "Inclusive school leaders – their role in raising the achievement of all learners", *Journal of Educational Administration*, which has been published in final form at: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-10-2019-0190>

General rights

Copyright for the publications made accessible via the Edinburgh Research Explorer is retained by the author(s) and / or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing these publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

Take down policy

The University of Edinburgh has made every reasonable effort to ensure that Edinburgh Research Explorer content complies with UK legislation. If you believe that the public display of this file breaches copyright please contact openaccess@ed.ac.uk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.





INCLUSIVE SCHOOL LEADERS – THEIR ROLE IN RAISING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL LEARNERS

Journal:	<i>Journal of Educational Administration</i>
Manuscript ID	JEA-10-2019-0190.R3
Manuscript Type:	Academic Paper
Keywords:	inclusion, Transformational Leadership, Distributed Leadership, instructional leadership, inclusive school leadership

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

MODELS OF INCLUSIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP FOR RAISING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL LEARNERS

Edda Óskarsdóttir¹, Verity Donnelly¹, Marcella Turner-Cmucha¹ and Lani Florian²

¹European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

²University of Edinburgh

Abstract

Purpose - This article presents a model based on a review of international and European policy and current Agency work on school leadership for inclusive education. The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education is an independent organization that acts as a platform for collaboration for the ministries of education in 31 member countries. Member countries’ agree that the ultimate goal for inclusive education systems is to provide all learners with opportunities for meaningful high-quality education in their neighborhood school alongside their peers.

Approach - Key issues addressing competences for inclusive school leadership, support and professional development opportunities for inclusive school leaders, and policy frameworks that support inclusive leadership across the whole education system are explored. The Ecosystem of Inclusive Education Systems model sets out the micro level (involves classroom practice directly affecting learner’s development and outcomes), meso-level (school structures and processes), exo-level (supportive structures within the community) and macro-level (wider systems and policy environment).

Implications - This manuscript creates a fundamental challenge for policy-makers and practitioners who need to find ways of breaking connections between disadvantage, educational failure and restricted life chances, to achieve equity and excellence for all learners. Inclusive school leaders play a key role in effecting change in order to raise the achievement of all learners in their schools.

Originality/value - The model aims to support analysis of the policy context and interactions between the structures and processes at different levels to ensure effective support for inclusive school leadership and development of appropriate competences.

Keywords Inclusive education, Inclusive school leadership, Transformational leadership, Instructional leadership, Distributed leadership, Core functions of school leaders

Paper type Conceptual paper

MODELS OF INCLUSIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP FOR RAISING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL LEARNERS

Introduction

The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency) was established by the Danish Government in 1996 as the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education. Today it provides a platform for cross-national collaboration for the ministries of education in 31 European countries¹. It is co-funded by the member ministries of education and by the European Institutions. The Agency is an independent, self-governing, non-profit organization that works to promote the common values of the European Union (EU): respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities (Council of the European Union, 2018). The Agency was established by the Ministries of Education in its member countries to act as a platform for collaboration in the field of special needs and inclusive education to improve educational policy and practice for learners with special needs. This aim takes into account issues such as equal opportunities, accessibility, inclusive education and the promotion of quality of education, whilst recognizing the differences in countries' policies, practice and contexts (European Agency, 2018a).

The EU is a supra-national body with governance powers that have been transferred to it from its member states. Currently, with 28 member states, the EU reflects what has

¹ 31 countries, 35 jurisdictions: Austria, Belgium (Flemish and French communities), Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales)

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

been described as ‘intense localism against a background of cooperative internationalism’ (de Bilj, 2005, p. 222). This combination of localism and internationalism creates an interesting dynamic and sets the context for pan European collaboration. For example, education remains an area of national and sub-national jurisdiction and governance (the principle of subsidiarity). However, shared commitment to the common values of the EU support cross-national movements to harmonize and work collectively on shared education goals and objectives. Thus, while education remains under the jurisdiction of member states, it is also considered a ‘specific commitment’ within the EU and many education programs are supported under various policy initiatives of EU’s ‘education area’. Cooperation on a shared education agenda across the EU is understood as being in line with the goals of social cohesion, justice and equity in education.

Although the Agency is firmly established and strongly associated with the education of children with special educational needs and disabilities, all member countries have the shared vision to improve educational policy and practice that support inclusive education systems so that all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community (European Agency, 2015). The countries are at different stages of working towards this vision and employ different ways to get there, depending on their past and current contexts and histories.

While the Agency projects are firmly rooted in the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) as a policy framework which calls for inclusive education for persons with disabilities, its work is also influenced by and aims to inform the international drive to extend the remit of inclusive education to all learners. Here, the concept of inclusion as promoted in the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for

education (SDG 4): 'to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' links the remit of the Agency to a European enduring understanding of inclusion as a strategy for achieving social cohesion (Council of the European Union, 2018; Bánfalvy, 2007), and as part of the response to the equity issues that are raised in relation to the harmonization and integration processes of the EU.

Inclusive education is viewed as playing a key role in creating socially inclusive societies, addressing discrimination and racism, and reducing school failure and learner drop-out (European Agency, 2015). The move to more inclusive policy and practice creates a fundamental challenge for policy-makers and practitioners who need to find ways of breaking connections between disadvantage, educational failure and restricted life chances. Because school leadership practices are both directly and indirectly connected with positive outcomes for learners (Mac Ruairc, 2013), they are considered crucial in any change process that aims to raise the achievement of all learners in inclusive schools (Donnelly *et al.*, 2016). The development of an inclusive school culture and pedagogy for all learners promotes in particular the academic and social achievement of learners with disabilities (European Agency 2018b). However, there has been little focus on inclusive school leadership despite increasing focus on practice in European-level policy documents (e.g. Council of the European Union, 2018).

This paper reports on a current Agency project, Supporting Inclusive School Leadership (SISL), a cross-national project that considers how best to ensure that school leaders meet the needs of *all* learners in their school communities (European Agency, 2018c). The SISL project is organized over two phases. In the first phase the project examined current theories of school leadership together with the core functions of school

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

leaders in participating countries in order to develop a model specifically focused on inclusive school leadership. A focus of this first phase was to reflect on the policy context and roles/responsibilities of school leaders enabling them to fulfil the complex responsibilities associated with inclusive school development at different system levels, using the ecosystem model of inclusive education. The second phase of the SISL project is in its early stages and will build on information from the first phase. The focus in this second phase is to develop a policy guidance framework and an open-source self-review tool for mapping country policies for inclusive school leadership. Agency projects such as SISL focus on research findings and policy developments that support countries to chart their own course towards a common goal. This process of cross-national working permits member countries with their distinctive national, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversities to work together on common goals.

The concept of school leadership

Leadership has been interpreted in different ways, but it can be defined as a process of providing direction and applying influence (Lumby and Coleman, 2016). Leadership involves managing people’s emotions, thoughts and actions decisively in order to influence others towards a preferred direction (Diamond and Spillane, 2016). In this description, leadership resides in the relationship between leaders and those with whom they work. The relationship is built on the motivation and commitment of both parties, moving people to action by influencing and challenging their thinking and having them reflect on the values and understandings that constitute the base of their practice (Krüger and Scheerens, 2012).

In this paper, the term school leader is used to refer to all those in key leadership roles in schools and learning communities. Such leaders may also be referred to as

1
2
3 headteachers, school directors or principals, as well as leadership taking place in teams.

4
5 Their roles focus on enlisting and guiding the talents and energies of teachers, pupils and
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
parents toward achieving common educational aims. It is important to acknowledge that
leading a school involves a balance of leadership focused on values, vision and the future,
and management activities that are concerned with making things work (West-Burnham
and Harris, 2015).

The landscape of educational leadership in Europe has changed drastically over past
decades as schools and school systems have developed. This is due to growing diversity of
student populations due to migration, and other factors that contribute to the complexity of
the school leader's role such as increasing school autonomy and demands for increasing
accountability (Bauer and Silver, 2018; European Commission, 2017). In addition, school
leaders increasingly share leadership tasks and work with a range of partners in the school
and local community and beyond (European Agency, 2018c). Consequently, school leaders
have the potential to play a key role as change managers in wider system reform.

Leading a school therefore is a demanding mixture of tasks that require, among
other competencies, a vision, a capacity for strategic thinking and efficient resource
management, and the ability to improve learning environments and learning cultures
(European Commission, 2017). Initial training, professional development and providing on-
going support for leaders are key for the development of effective inclusive schools. In
particular, leaders must be capable of promoting and sustaining a stable environment in
order to recruit and retain the best teachers for marginalized children and young people
(Khalifa *et al.*, 2016). Leaders need to be knowledgeable and well prepared to support
teaching that meets the needs of each learner, to tackle inequalities and withstand the

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

resistance they are likely to encounter to change in their school community (Billingsley *et al.*, 2018; Lumby and Coleman, 2016).

Core leadership functions

The SISL project literature review (European Agency 2018c) identified three main organizational functions associated with the effective operation of inclusive schools (Billingsley *et al.*, 2014; 2018; McLeskey and Waldron, 2015; Skoglund and Stäcker, 2016).

These functions fall into three broad categories: setting direction, human development and organizational development. Although they are interrelated, the aim of each of the three core functions is distinctive.

Setting direction

Leadership is important for giving direction, with a focus on the values and discourse that support inclusive practice. This discourse is grounded in reflection between stakeholders about what constitutes such practice (Ekins, 2013). Exploring and sharing meanings about inclusion, aiming to promote the best interests of learners both academically and socially, through fairness, justice and equity are essential features of this reflection on practice (Stone-Johnson, 2014).

Enacting a vision of inclusive schools requires leaders to build a common philosophy or inclusive culture across the school. Key aspects of that inclusive culture involve embracing:

- a common definition of inclusion;
- an authentic sense of belonging;
- a commitment that “all” means each and every student; and

- a presumption of competence for ALL students (Theoharis and Causton, 2014).

An important factor in achieving the strategic vision is defining the standards for implementation of policy and practice, in particular attending to the development of professional competences of teachers and staff in working with diverse groups of learners.

Human development

The European Agency (2015) notes that leadership is one of the main drivers of the quality of teaching, and teacher quality is the most important school-level influence on learner achievement. According to Dorczak (2013), school leaders' main role is 'to release and develop the talents of all teachers or other members of staff as well [as] recognizing and activating the potential of all students' (p. 55). Thus is school leaders play a key role in raising learner achievement (European Agency, 2017).

At the center of this strategic role is monitoring and evaluating teaching, in order to collect information to ensure that professional development supports and motivates each teacher to work for all learners (Black and Simon, 2014). In this way, leaders build capacity by developing teachers' knowledge and skills, and promoting a school-wide professional community that facilitates reflective dialogue and collaboration about inclusive instructional practices (Humada-Ludeke, 2013). The European Agency (2015) further recognizes the need for leaders to develop leadership skills in others, for example, in teachers and middle managers, in order to share or 'distribute' leadership tasks and create an inclusive and collaborative school culture. By distributing and sharing leadership more widely, the opportunities for increasing learning capacity and building social capital with schools and across the system more widely are maximized (Harris and Jones, 2013).

1
2
3 *Organizational development*
4

5
6 School leaders play a critical role in implementing inclusive policy and practice and, in
7
8 particular, in creating a school culture that embraces diversity (Cherkowski and
9
10 Ragoonaden, 2016; Mac Ruairc, 2013). This means that they affect elements of
11
12 organizational development and need systematically to address the following areas:
13
14 curriculum, assessment, pedagogy, school organization (e.g. use of spaces, learner grouping,
15
16 etc.) and developing partnerships with parents and the local/wider community (Fultz, 2017).
17
18 They also create an organizational climate that is conducive to change (Ehrhart *et al.*, 2015).
19
20
21 School leaders are responsible for maintaining a school culture that is collegial, interactive
22
23 and focused on supporting teachers and learners throughout the educational process.
24
25 Setting the tone for an inclusive culture requires school leaders to nurture teacher morale
26
27 and professional collegiality.
28
29
30
31
32

33
34 Using human and financial resources in a strategic way and aligning them with
35
36 pedagogical purposes can influence the way school activities improve teaching and learning.
37
38 Thus, school leaders need to be involved in decisions regarding teacher recruitment. Being
39
40 able to select the teaching staff is central to establishing a school culture and capacity that
41
42 has beneficial effects on learners' achievement (Stoll and Temperley, 2010).
43
44
45
46

47 Elements of an inclusive school pedagogy and practice, as highlighted in the literature
48
49 (Deppeler *et al.*, 2015) are based on:
50
51

- 52 • Engaging students in intellectual challenges;
53
54
55 • Structuring supportive learning environments;
56
57
58
59
60

- Recognizing difference and being connected with student's interests and understandings;
- Integrating assessment with teaching and learning;
- Enabling student's voice and active participation;
- Recognizing and reflexively monitoring teaching and learning; and
- Positively influencing the inclusion of students in classrooms (p. 5).

Increasingly, there is a trend towards decentralized decision-making that impacts on the level of autonomy of school leaders. Harris (2016) notes that the pressure to deliver change and improvement has shifted much more towards principals with far greater responsibility placed upon them to deliver school and system improvement.

School leaders need autonomy to set direction, and influence human and organizational development. However, they also need access to support to meet the increasing demands and levels of accountability. Leading inclusive schools requires knowledge of leadership theories and their relevance in supporting quality learning for all and addressing the core functions. These theories are explored in the following section.

Leadership to support inclusive practice

The SISL project identified three main theories of school leadership linked to successful inclusive practices: transformational leadership, distributed leadership and instructional leadership. These theories share a common focus on developing a shared vision, shared ownership and decision-making (Kershner and McQuillan, 2016; Urick, 2016).

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Transformational leadership emanates from the management literature (Burns, 1978), while instructional and distributed leadership originate in research on education administration.

Some information about each of these types of leadership is provided below. After considering each one in isolation, it is important to look at how the three interact and can be used together.

Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership is associated with inspiring others, building a shared vision, providing support and developing a collaborative culture (Yu *et al.*, 2002). It focuses on the establishment of structures and cultures which enhance the quality of teaching and learning, setting direction, developing people and (re)designing the organization (Day *et al.*, 2016). Transformational school leadership is traditionally associated with the ability to facilitate change and innovation through impacting people and cultures within schools (Navickaitė, 2013). This theory can support the core functions of setting direction and organizational development discussed above.

School leaders aiming to reform organizational structures to develop a more inclusive school may take up transformational leadership to establish and communicate a vision, create opportunities for professional development, to build capacity and encourage professional learning and innovation (Urlick, 2016). According to transformational leadership theory, given adequate support, school leaders can influence school staff to become highly engaged and motivated by setting inspirational goals that are associated with values in which the staff believes, or are persuaded to believe (Leithwood and Sun, 2012). This means

that leaders need to identify which values are critical to the performance of their staff and focus on leadership practices most likely to have a positive influence on those values.

Research on successful school leaders has found that the ability to improve or transform schools in the long term is connected to the leaders' understanding and analysis of the school's needs and the way they apply clearly articulated, shared educational values (Day *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, strengthening school leadership, particularly for responding to diversity and developing inclusive attitudes, has been identified as an effective strategy to prevent school failure (European Agency, 2019).

Distributed leadership

Distributed leadership is primarily concerned with the practice of leadership, rather than specific leadership roles or responsibilities. Theories of distributed leadership in research literature place emphasis on collaborative efforts based on a network of relationships between people. Jones and Harris (2014) note a direct connection between social capital and distributed leadership as both are based on the core principles of collaborative practice and social connections. Distributed leadership that shares responsibility across leadership teams can therefore be connected to the core function of human development (Hansen, 2013; Hargreaves and Fink, 2003; Spillane *et al.*, 2001).

The literature has suggested that shared or distributed leadership that focuses on the development of others, extending beyond the delegation of tasks in school management, would be more efficient in moving schools towards inclusive education (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010; Busher *et al.*, 2007). Effective leaders draw on the collective talent and ability within the school and connect people in a meaningful and productive way (Jones and Harris, 2014).

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

This approach goes beyond traditional leadership that focuses on top-down hierarchical styles. Distributed leadership firstly involves the devolution of responsibilities to middle management teams that are able to support and manage the transfer of knowledge and skills. Secondly, it enables all staff and school stakeholders to take responsibility by promoting flexibility and sharing practice (European Agency, 2016). In particular, distributed leadership extends to teacher-leaders (Liasidou and Svensson, 2013) and to any other staff member, learner or parent who takes on a leading role within the school. Such actors are important because they become ‘enforcers’ or ‘drivers’ of the change process and multiply the headteacher’s actions.

Thus, distributed leadership focuses on the interactions between those in formal and informal leadership roles more than the actions they perform. The main concern is how leadership influences organizational and instructional improvement (Harris, 2013) which in turn serves to raise the achievement of all learners. According to OECD (2016), distributed leadership leads to a greater sense of purpose in schools, as it promotes teamwork, multi-disciplinary and professional collaboration among teaching and non-teaching staff, and other stakeholders, professionals and services.

Instructional leadership

Instructional leadership is associated with ‘setting and communicating clear instructional goals and expectations’ and ‘promoting and participating in teacher learning and development’ (Brown and Chai, 2012, p. 753). Instructional leadership emphasizes the importance of establishing clear educational goals, planning the curriculum and evaluating teachers and teaching and can as such be connected to the core functions of human and organizational development. The prime focus is on the leaders’ responsibility for promoting

1
2
3 better measurable outcomes for learners, highlighting the importance of enhancing the
4
5 quality of classroom teaching and learning (Day *et al.*, 2016).
6
7

8 Instructional leadership furthermore emphasizes the creation of a supportive,
9
10 encouraging work environment that can support the development of teaching practices
11
12 best suited to improve academic performance (Hansen and Lárusdóttir, 2015). This type of
13
14 leadership has also been termed 'learning-centered leadership, leadership for learning or
15
16 curriculum leadership', as one key dimension focuses on developing and co-ordinating an
17
18 effective school curriculum (Gumus *et al.*, 2018).
19
20
21
22

23
24 Research suggests that the best way to raise learner achievement is to improve the
25
26 instructional practices of teachers. A further, powerful factor is the leadership practice of
27
28 the headteacher or principal in facilitating human development, that is both learner and
29
30 teacher learning (OECD, 2014). Central to that goal is attending to the pedagogical
31
32 repertoire, decision-making skills, sense of self and professional efficacy of both teachers
33
34 and leaders (Donnelly *et al.*, 2016). Thus, while teachers are pedagogical experts, school
35
36 leaders co-ordinate the efforts of teachers and teacher-leaders to support each other and
37
38 the central mission of the school (Urlick, 2016).
39
40
41
42

43
44 Analysis of OECD 2013 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) of 23
45
46 countries found that, while varying degrees of instructional leadership exist in different
47
48 national settings, school leaders who adopted a stronger instructional leadership focus were
49
50 associated with:
51
52

- 53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
- more collaboration between teachers;
 - more positive teacher-learner interactions;
 - greater recognition of teacher innovation (Sammons *et al.*, 2014).

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

A further analysis of TALIS 2013 showed that, in schools where instructional leadership is favored, teachers in primary and secondary education were also more engaged in reflective dialogue (OECD, 2016).

According to instructional leadership theory, the responsibility for promoting better measurable outcomes for learners by enhancing the quality of classroom teaching and learning is the leaders' prime focus (Gawlik, 2017). However, the challenge is to identify *how* leaders can facilitate teacher learning and what it is that teachers need to be able to do to implement the kind of instruction that will support learners in achieving educational goals (Neumerski, 2013).

A model of inclusive school leadership

The SISL project has developed a model of inclusive school leadership (see Figure 1) that integrates the models of leadership discussed above with the three core functions of school leadership: setting direction and building a vision, human development and organizational development and the foci from the three theories of leadership (transformational, distributed and instructional).

<Insert Figure 1 here.>

Figure 1 shows how the leadership models can influence and support the core functions of inclusive school leaders. When these three theories of leadership co-exist in an integrated practice, there is a substantial impact on learner achievement, the pedagogical quality in schools and on the development of professional learning communities in schools (OECD, 2016).

Based on the model and the vision of inclusive education systems (European Agency, 2015), the SISL project has defined inclusive school leaders as follows:

Inclusive school leaders (or leadership teams) have the vision that “all learners of any age should be provided with meaningful high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers” (European Agency, 2015).

Such leaders combine elements of instructional, transformative and distributed leadership models. They take responsibility for and value all learners. They work to ensure their full participation and engagement by setting a clear direction, developing staff and other stakeholders and using all available evidence, experience and expertise to collaboratively create and sustain the learning community and support everyone to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The model of inclusive school leadership aims to close the gap in international and European policy, by specifically addressing leadership for inclusive school policy and practice. It brings together both the underpinning vision and the core functions of school leadership. However, a supportive policy framework is needed to enable school leaders to balance these tasks and influence the success of both teachers and learners in education and this will be considered in the following section.

Inclusive school leadership within the inclusive education ecosystem

Schools do not sit in isolation from the communities and the wider state, national, global and historical contexts within which they operate. These external factors, along with internal school and classroom factors, will determine the success (or not) of inclusive education (Anderson *et al.*, 2014).

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

The Agency’s Ecosystem of Inclusive Education Systems model (European Agency, 2017a) has been developed to set out the main structures and processes that influence every learners’ participation and that must be considered to maximize opportunities for learning and achievement. The ecosystem was originally developed as part of the Agency project on Inclusive Early Childhood Education (European Agency, 2017b) to provide a holistic model of the complex networks in the environment that affect every learner.

The Ecosystem contains four levels: macro, exo, meso and micro levels, which co-exist, interact and influence each other. These levels influence and govern the work of school leaders to different degrees. Across the levels, the school leaders play different roles to fulfil the core functions of setting direction, human and organizational development. The importance of the main theories of leadership in supporting school leaders to fulfil the various roles also become evident. The Ecosystem here is employed to explain the policy context and how that affects the roles, or core functions, responsibilities and influence of inclusive school leaders within the different system levels.

The **macro-level** system represents the wider social, cultural and legislative context that encompasses all the other systems. This embeds the principles of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child and on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which should in turn be visible in each country’s policies for equity and non-discrimination in education. The policies provide a clear vision of how to implement inclusive education and how the implementation is a shared responsibility of all educators, leaders and policy-makers (European Agency, 2015). These national-level policies affect the work of the inclusive school leader directly, as they both create the environment within which the leader works and influence the professional development and training of leaders.

This level contains key national/regional policy areas, such as curriculum and assessment, monitoring, quality assurance and accountability, governance and funding and collaboration with other institutions and the local community. Autonomy in these areas can facilitate or hinder the effectiveness of an inclusive school leader as they strive to implement national policy at local/school level, setting a course and a strategic vision for inclusive practice. School leaders who feel a sense of ownership of reform are more likely to engage their staff and learners in implementing and sustaining change.

The **exo-level** system represents the community context. Here, inclusive school leaders play a key role in building relationships with others beyond the school – for example families, employers, support agencies, other schools, colleges, universities in the community. Leaders influence and structure collaboration with these different stakeholders for the benefit of learners, their families and staff within the school, fulfilling the core functions of both human and organizational development. Working jointly (e.g. with the health and social sectors) can improve the efficient use of resources and bring about a more coherent approach, reducing unnecessary duplication of provision or procedures in the longer term (Byrne *et al.*, 2015). Here, leaders need access to human and financial resources within and beyond the school.

The **meso level** represents the school and the interactions which influence its structures, processes and practices. This level focuses on the traditions, culture and ethos, values and ideology, patterns of authority and collaboration within the school. It includes organizing time to build professional learning communities and to engage with parents and the local community – a process which ‘sits’ in both exo- and meso-levels.

Inclusive practice is about the ways decisions about support and resources are made and how specialist knowledge is employed (Florian, 2010) and therefore, requires flexibility in for example, school organization, resource allocation and the provision of support for all learners and teachers. School leaders need autonomy to provide direction and to influence the successful transformation of the structures and processes through distributed and instructional leadership, working within a social justice framework to sustain a welcoming, supportive school culture with trusting relationships (White and Jones, 2011). Instructional leadership is also important to address both equity and excellence in achieving positive outcomes for all – in the spirit of the ‘ethic of everybody’ (Hart *et al.*, 2004).

At the school level, leaders are accountable for school outcomes often set out within the national framework, but at the same time they are accountable to learners and their families. To respond to this responsibility, leaders must recognize the importance of contextual analysis and the need to use qualitative and quantitative data, including information and feedback from all key stakeholders for on-going improvement.

The **micro level** involves classroom practice that directly affects the learner’s development and outcomes. Here, the school leader demonstrates a positive attitude and a commitment towards raising the achievement of all learners. Leaders should use available autonomy to adapt the curriculum and assessment frameworks to ensure that they are fit for purpose and appropriate for local needs.

The responsibility of the inclusive school leader is to support the development of inclusive pedagogy that attends to individual differences between pupils but avoids the marginalization that can occur when pedagogical responses are designed only with individual needs in mind (Florian and Beaton, 2017). The provision of additional support for

1
2
3 learners who experience barriers to learning should focus on creating quality learning
4
5 opportunities, rather than on provision and placement (Ekins, 2013).
6
7

8
9 Inclusive pedagogy should be learner-centered, involving learners in a personalized
10
11 process, not expecting them to learn the same content, at the same speed, or employ the
12
13 same approach (Wolfe, Steinberg and Hoffman, 2013). To build teachers' confidence in their
14
15 pedagogical skills and the belief that they can teach all learners, school leaders should
16
17 employ instructional leadership (Óskarsdóttir, 2017). Finally, learners should be given a
18
19 voice in matters that concern them in their education and school leaders can create a
20
21 platform or a space for democratic discussions with learners, both individually and in groups
22
23 (Bragg, 2007; Portela, 2013).
24
25
26

27
28 Table 1 outlines the key roles and responsibilities of school leaders at each system
29
30 level. It can be seen that at every level, school leaders draw on all three types of leadership
31
32 to fulfil the core functions and in particular these roles and responsibilities that support
33
34 inclusive practice.
35
36
37

38
39 <Insert Table 1 here.>
40
41

42 The development of inclusive school leadership within the Ecosystem needs a
43
44 supportive policy context at national and local levels. The next section provides some
45
46 discussion on the ideas presented above and the policy implications.
47
48
49

50 51 **Discussion: Key levers for supporting inclusive school leadership**

52
53

54 To date, European policy has lacked an explicit focus on inclusive school leadership. The SISL
55
56 project was undertaken to examine this policy gap and consider how all school leaders can
57
58 be enabled to attend to equity and raise the achievement of *all* learners in their community.
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

The SISL project was established to develop and promote inclusive school-level leadership through national- and local-level policy frameworks and support mechanisms. To this end, it adapted an ecosystem model to reflect the ways that school leaders operate at the interface between educational policies and their implementation. This provides school leaders with the potential to extend their sphere of influence as they play a key role in managing change and supporting wider system transformation. The ecosystem model provides a framework for the consideration of the roles and responsibilities of inclusive school leaders – and also related areas of accountability – within and across system levels. Importantly, it is intended to support reflection on developing equitable practice so that all are included and no one is excluded from learning in school.

In addition to the leadership model described above, the SISL project has identified three key levers necessary for leaders to fulfil their core functions and manage change towards more inclusive practice. These are: access, autonomy and accountability (European Agency, 2018c). While these levers are seen to facilitate inclusive school leadership practices, they must be underpinned by relevant national policies that support the vision that ‘all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers’ (European Agency, 2015). To achieve this vision, education policy will need to facilitate the development of more flexible learning locations and innovative ways to organize learners and personalize learning through inclusive pedagogy, relevant curricula and fit for purpose assessment. These developments require a focus on the education and on-going development of leaders and teachers to ensure that they acquire the competences needed to empower them to meet the needs and raise the achievement of all learners. Therefore, in supporting school

1
2
3 leaders, education policy should take into account the levers they require to fulfil their
4
5 roles. Thus, policy should facilitate:
6
7

8
9 *Access to:*

- 10
11
- 12 • appropriate pay and status in the community, on-going support commensurate with
13 levels of autonomy;
14
15
 - 16 • real engagement with a full range of stakeholders at all system levels including
17 communication with policy makers to extend their sphere of influence;
18
19
 - 20 • professional development and on-going support – formal as well as informal (e.g.
21 through collaboration with colleagues/other stakeholders at all system levels);
22
23
 - 24 • resources to develop the capacity of the workforce for diversity and implement
25 national policy initiatives.
26
27
28
29
30
31
32

33 *Autonomy* to make evidence-informed decisions on the strategic direction, development
34 and organization of the school including, for example:
35
36

- 37
38
- 39 • using available flexibility within national policy context to adapt the curriculum,
40 assessment and accreditation frameworks to ensure that they establish high
41 expectations and meet local community and learner needs;
42
43
 - 44 • the appointment of teachers and staff able to take responsibility for and raise the
45 achievement of all learners through innovative learner-centered pedagogy;
46
47
 - 48 • the development/empowerment of teachers and staff through shared leadership
49 tasks and collaborative professional development;
50
51
 - 52 • proactive work with other agencies and the local community:
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

- to provide support for all learners without recourse to labelling or bureaucratic processes;
- to provide expertise to support school development and extend learning opportunities and support for staff and learners;
- secure knowledge of research evidence to further develop the learning community.
- about funding and equitable allocation of resources.

and regarding accountability, that they:

- are able to set out the vision, values and outcomes for which they (and other stakeholders) wish to be held to account (e.g. equity, non-discrimination, meeting the requirements of all learners from the local community, personal and social as well as academic outcomes);
- are held accountable (to learners, families, local community) through mechanisms that are aligned with other policy areas, ensuring support for inclusive education policy and practice;
- play a lead role in monitoring, self-review and evaluation, together with key stakeholders, to provide information on learner outcomes and reflect on data to inform on-going improvement.

While the three levers of access, accountability and autonomy are important for inclusive school leaders, they also increase the complexity of their work. Autonomy is dependent on the extent to which the education system is decentralized. School leaders working in systems where there is strong national prescription have a more limited role

(Pont, 2014). It follows that, as the autonomy (and accountability) of school leaders increases, there must be a concomitant increase in relevant professional development and on-going support to enable them to meet these increasing complex obligations/responsibilities. These include skills in financial administration, to enable leaders to priorities resources to certain areas of development (Pont *et al.*, 2008) and the ability to monitor progress and use evidence and data to plan and design appropriate improvement strategies to raise learner achievement.

Conclusion

Inclusive leaders are responsible for leading schools that build on the principles of equity to raise the achievement of *all* learners and their families in the local community. For inclusion to be fully embraced by the school, school leaders need to set a strategic vision and attend to both human and organizational development. The SISL project has described core functions of inclusive school leaders and their increasingly complex range of responsibilities. The project is aligned with the view of Brauckmann and his colleagues (2016) that more light needs to be shed on the on-going debate about the contextualized adaptation processes of a transnational construct of leadership. The SISL project acknowledges the need for policy that sets a supportive context and enables leaders to work through the three levers of access, autonomy and accountability to manage the change process towards more inclusive schools. It establishes a starting point for member countries to address the issue raised by Jones and Harris (2014) that the real task for school leaders who pursue organizational change is to create conditions that reinforce and reward high quality teaching and learning that positively affect and improve achievement for all learners.

References

Ainscow, M. and Sandill, A. (2010), "Developing inclusive education systems: the role of organizational cultures and leadership", *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 14 (4), 401–416

Anderson, J., Boyle, C. and Deppeler, J.M. (2014), "The Ecology of Inclusive Education: Reconceptualizing Bronfenbrenner", in Zhang, H., Keung Chan, P.W. and Boyle, C. (Eds), *Equality in Education: Fairness and Inclusion*, Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, pp. 23–34.

Bánfalvy, C. (2007), "The education and the social inclusion of disabled persons in Europe: reforms, theories and policy developments", Report of Include-ED, Sixth Framework Programme, European Commission, Brussels.

Bauer, S.C. and Silver, L. (2018), "The impact of job isolation on new principals' sense of efficacy, job satisfaction, burnout and persistence", *Journal of Education Administration*, Vol. 56, pp. 315–331.

Billingsley, B., DeMatthews, D., Connally, K. and McLeskey, J. (2018), "Leadership for effective inclusive schools: Considerations for preparation and reform", *Australasian Journal of Special and Inclusive Education*, Vol. 42 No. 1, pp. 65–81.

Billingsley, B., McLeskey, J. and Crockett, J.B. (2014), *Principal Leadership: Moving Toward Inclusive and High-Achieving Schools For Students With Disabilities*, University of Florida, Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform Center, Gainseville.

- Black, W.R. and Simon, M.D. (2014), "Leadership for all students: planning for more inclusive school practices", *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*, Vol. 9, pp. 153-172.
- Bragg, S. (2007), "'But I listen to children anyway!'—Teacher perspectives on pupil voice", *Educational Action Research*, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 505-518.
- Brauckmann, S., Geißler, G., Feldhoff, T. and Pashiardis, P., (2016), "Instructional leadership in Germany: An evolutionary perspective", *International Studies in Educational Administration (Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management (CCEAM))*, Volume 44 No. 2.
- Brown, G. and Chai, C. (2012), "Assessing instructional leadership: A longitudinal study of new principals", *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 50 No. 6, pp. 753-772.
- Burns, J.M. (1978), *Leadership*, Harper and Row, New York.
- Busher, H., Hammersley-Fletcher, L. and Turner, C. (2007), "Making sense of middle leadership: community, power and practice", *School Leadership and Management*, Vol. 27 No. 5, pp. 405-422.
- Byrne, B., Maguire, L. and Lundy, L. (2015), "*Reporting on best practice in cross-departmental working practices for children and young people*", Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People, Belfast.
- Cherkowski, S. and Ragoonaden, K. (2016), "Leadership for diversity: Intercultural communication competence as professional development", *Teacher Learning and Professional Development*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 34-43.

Council of the European Union (2018), *Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on Promoting Common Values, Inclusive Education, and the European Dimension of Teaching*, Council of the European Union, Brussels.

Day, C., Gu, Q. and Sammons, P. (2016), "The impact of leadership on student outcomes: How successful school leaders use transformational and instructional strategies to make a difference", *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 52 No. 2, pp. 221-258.

de Blij, Harm. (2005), *Why Geography Matters: Three challenges facing America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Deppeler, J., Loreman, T. and Smith, R. (2015), "Teaching and learning for all", in Deppeler, J. (Ed), *Inclusive Pedagogy Across the Curriculum*, Emerald Group Publishing, Bingley, pp. 1-10.

Diamond, J.B. and Spillane, J.P. (2016), "School leadership and management from a distributed perspective: A 2016 retrospective and prospective", *Management in Education*, Vol. 30 No. 4, pp. 147-154.

Donnelly, V., Ó Murchú, F. and Thies, W. (2016), "Addressing the challenges of raising achievement for all", in Watkins, A. and Meijer, C.J.W. (Eds), *Implementing Inclusive Education: Issues in Bridging the Policy-Practice Gap*, Emerald Group Publishing, Bingley, pp. 181-205.

Dorczak, R. (2013), "Inclusion through the lens of school culture", in Mac Ruairc, G., Ottesen, E. and Precey, R. (Eds), *Leadership for Inclusive Education*, Springer, Dordrecht, pp. 47-57.

Ehrhart, M.G., Torres, E.M., Wright, L.A., Martinez, S.Y. and Aarons, G.A. (2015), "Validating the implementation climate scale (ICS) in child welfare organizations", *Child Abuse and Neglect*, Vol. 53, pp. 17-26.

Ekins, A. (2013), "Special education within the context of an inclusive school", in Mac Ruairc, G., Ottesen, E. and Precey, R. (Eds), *Leadership for Inclusive Education: Values, Vision and Voices*, Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, pp. 19-33.

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2015), *Agency Position on Inclusive Education Systems*, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Odense.

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2016), *Raising the Achievement of All Learners in Inclusive Education – Literature Review*, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Odense.

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2017a), *Raising the Achievement of All Learners: A Resource to Support Self-Review*, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Odense.

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2017b), *Inclusive Early Childhood Education: New Insights and Tools – Contributions from a European Study*, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Odense.

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2018a), *Articles of Association*. Odense, Denmark. www.european-agency.org/resources/publications/articles-association (Last accessed January 2020).

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2018b), *Evidence of the Link Between Inclusive Education and Social Inclusion: Final Summary Report*. (S. Symeonidou, ed.). Odense, Denmark.

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2018c), *Supporting Inclusive School Leadership: Literature Review*, European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Odense.

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2019), *Preventing School Failure: A Review of the Literature*. (G. Squires and A. Kefallinou, eds.). Odense, Denmark

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (in press), *Inclusive school leadership: Exploring policies across Europe*. (M. Turner-Cmuchal, E. Óskarsdottir and V. Donnelly, eds.). Odense, Denmark

European Commission (2017), *Commission staff working document accompanying the document Communication on school development and excellent teaching for a great start in life*, European Commission, Brussels.

Florian, L. (2010), "The concept of inclusive pedagogy", in Hallett, F. and Hallett, G. (Eds), *Transforming the role of the SENCo: Achieving the national award for SEN coordination*, Open University Press, Maidenhead, pp. 61-72.

Florian, L. and Beaton, M. (2017), "Inclusive pedagogy in action: getting it right for every child", *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, Vol. 22 No. 8, pp. 870-884.

Fultz, D.M. (2017), *Ten Steps for Genuine Leadership in Schools*, Routledge, New York.

Gawlik, M.A. (2017), "Leadership Knowledge and Practices in the Context of Charter Schools", *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 1-32.

- Gumus, S., Bellibas, M.S., Esen, M. and Gumus, E. (2018), "A systematic review of studies on leadership models in educational research from 1980 to 2014", *Education Management Administration and Leadership*, Vol. 46 No. 1, pp. 25-48.
- Hansen, B. (2013), "Forysta og skólastarf", in Sigbórsson, R., Eggertsdóttir, R. and Frímannsson, G.H. (Eds), *Fagmennska í skólastarfi [Professionalism in education]*, Háskólaútgáfan, Reykjavík, pp. 77-92.
- Hansen, B. and Lárusdóttir, S.H. (2015), "Instructional leadership in compulsory schools in Iceland and the role of school principals", *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 59 No. 5, pp. 583-603.
- Hargreaves, A. and Fink, D. (2003), "Sustaining leadership", *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 84, 693–700.
- Harris, A. (2013), *Distributed Leadership Matters: Perspectives, Practicalities, and Potential*, Corwin, Thousand Oaks.
- Harris, A. (2016), "The changing nature of school principals' work: A commentary", *International Studies in Educational Administration*, Vol. 44 No. 2, pp. 111-114.
- Harris, A. and Jones, M. (2013), "System improvement through capacity building: The power and potential of professional learning communities", in Haslam, I., Khine, M.S. and Saleh, I. (Eds.), *Large Scale School Reform and Social Capital Building*, Routledge, London.
- Harris, A. and Jones, M. (2017), "Leading educational change and improvement at scale: Some inconvenient truths about system performance", *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, Vol. 20 No. 5, pp. 632-641.

Hart, S., Dixon, A., Drummond, M. and McIntyre, D. (2004), *Learning without Limits*, Open University Press, Maidenhead.

Humada-Ludeke, A. (2013), *The Creation of a Professional Learning Community for School Leaders: Insights on the Change Process from the Lens of the School Leader*, Sense Publishers, Rotterdam.

Jones, M. and Harris, A. (2014), "Principals leading successful organisational change", *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 27 No. 3, pp. 473-485.

Kershner, B. and McQuillan, P.J. (2016), "Complex adaptive schools: Educational leadership and school change", *Complicity: An International Journal of Complexity Education*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 4-29.

Khalifa, M.A., Gooden, M.A. and Davis, J.E. (2016), "Culturally responsive school leadership: a synthesis of the literature", *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 86 No. 4, pp. 1272-1311.

Krüger, M. and Scheerens, J. (2012), "Conceptual perspectives on school leadership", in Scheerens, J. (Ed), *School Leadership Effects Revisited*, SpringerBriefs in Education, Springer, Dordrecht, pp. 1-30.

Leithwood, K. and Sun, J. (2012), "The nature and effects of transformational school leadership: A meta-analytic review of unpublished research", *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 48 No. 3, pp. 387-423.

Liasidou, A. and Svensson, C. (2013), "Educating leaders for social justice: The case of special educational needs co-ordinators", *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, Vol. 18 No. 8, pp. 783-797.

Lumby, J. and Coleman, M. (2016), *Leading for equality: Making schools fairer*, SAGE Publications, London.

Mac Ruairc, G. (2013), "Including Inclusion: Exploring inclusive education for school leadership", available at www.schoolleadership.eu/sites/default/files/exploring-inclusive-education-for-school-leadership-2013.pdf (accessed 16th July 2019).

McLeskey, J. and Waldron, N.L. (2015), "Effective leadership makes schools truly inclusive", *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. 96 No. 5, pp. 68-73.

Navickaitė, J. (2013), "The expression of a principal's transformational leadership during the organizational change process: A case study of Lithuanian general education schools", *Problems of Education in the 21st Century*, Vol. 51, pp. 70-82.

Neumerski, C.M. (2013), "Rethinking instructional leadership, a review: What do we know about principal, teacher, and coach instructional leadership, and where should we go from here?", *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 49 No. 2, pp. 310-347.

OECD (2014), *New Insights from TALIS 2013*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

OECD (2016), *School Leadership for Learning: Insights from TALIS 2013*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Óskarsdóttir, E. (2017), *Constructing support as inclusive practice: A self-study (Doctoral dissertation)*. University of Iceland, School of Education, Reykjavík.

Pont, B. (2014), "School leadership: from practice to policy", *International Journal of Educational Leadership and Management*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 4-28.

Pont, B., Nusche, D. and Moorman, H. (2008), *Improving School Leadership, Volume 1: Policy and Practice*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

- Portela, A. (2013), "Students and leadership for inclusion", in Mac Ruairc, G. Ottesen, E. and Precey, R. (Eds), *Leadership for Inclusive Education: Vision, Values and Voices*, Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, pp. 163-173.
- Precey, R. and Mazurkiewicz, G. (2013), "Leadership for inclusion: An overview", in Mac Ruairc, G., Ottesen, E. and Precey, R. (Eds), *Leadership for Inclusive Education: Values, Vision and Voices*, Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, pp. 105-119.
- Sammons, P., Davis, S., Day, C. and Gu, Q. (2014), "Using mixed methods to investigate school improvement and the role of leadership: An example of a longitudinal study in England", *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 52 No. 5, pp. 565-589.
- Skoglund, P. and Stäcker, H. (2016), "How can education systems support all learners? Tipping-point leadership focused on cultural change and inclusive capability", in Watkins, A. and Meijer, C.J.W. (Eds.), *Implementing Inclusive Education: Issues in Bridging the Policy-Practice Gap*, Emerald Group Publishing, Bingley, pp. 111-136.
- Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R. and Diamond, J. B. (2001), "Investigating school leadership practice: A distributed perspective," *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 30 No. 3, pp. 23–28.
- Stoll, L. and Temperley, J. (2010), *Improving School Leadership: The Toolkit*, OECD Publishing, Paris.
- Stone-Johnson, C. (2014), "Responsible leadership", *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 50 No. 4, pp. 645-674.
- Theoharis, G. and Causton J. (2014), "Leading inclusive reform for students with disabilities: A school- and systemwide approach", *Theory into Practice*, Vol. 53 No. 2, pp. 82-97.

- United Nations (2015), "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)"
http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E
- Urlick, A. (2016), "Examining US principal perception of multiple leadership styles used to practice shared instructional leadership", *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 54 No. 2, pp. 152-172.
- West-Burnham, J. and Harris, D. (2015), *Leadership Dialogues*, Crown House Publishing, Bancyfelin.
- White, J.M. and Jones, P. (2011), "Creating school systems of inclusive leadership", in Jones, P., Fauske, J.R. and Carr, J.F. (Eds.), *Leading for Inclusion: How Schools can Build on the Strengths of all Learners*, Teachers College Press, New York, pp. 216-227.
- Wolfe, R.E., Steinberg, A. and Hoffman, N. (2013), *Anytime, Anywhere: Student-Centered Learning for Schools and Teachers*, Harvard Education Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Yu, H., Leithwood, K. and Jantzi, D. (2002), "The effects of transformational leadership on teachers' commitment to change in Hong Kong", *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 40 No. 4, pp. 368-389.

Table 1 The key roles and responsibilities of school leaders in the Ecosystem

Level	Roles and responsibilities
Macro (National/regional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Influence the development of national policy on equity and Inclusive Education through consultation and communication• Translate and implement policies in ways appropriate to their school context and values and manage school level change regarding: curriculum and assessment frameworks; professional development; funding and allocation of resources; quality assurance and accountability
Exo (Community level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build partnerships with support agencies, other schools/institutions at other system levels, businesses in the community• Build school capacity for diversity through research engagement and collaborative professional development activities e.g. with universities• Manage human resources, securing commitment to the shared vision of inclusion• Manage financial resources to meet the needs of the whole school community
Meso (School level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guide and influence school organisation and resources according to principles of equity• Engage the learning community in self-review and reflect on data to inform on-going school improvement• Provide opportunities for professional development• Ensure a continuum of support for all stakeholders• Show commitment to the ethic of everybody• Ensure curriculum and assessment are fit for purpose and meet the needs of all learners• Actively engage all families
Micro (Individual level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Influence learner centred practice/listening to learners, personalisation (centre)• Ensure that teachers take responsibility for all learners• Support innovative and flexible evidence-based pedagogy/practice in classrooms• Monitor classroom practice ensuring high quality education for all• Develop a culture of collaboration - positive and trusting relationships• Use data as a basis for teacher reflection and ongoing improvement

(European Agency, in press)

